

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SOFIA 00963 231459Z
ACTION EUR-03

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-----088792 232236Z /70
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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4605

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FOR EUR/EE 3 COPIES ONLY

FOR ANDREWS FROM MAGEE

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: OGEN
SUBJECT: OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

REF: STATE 104599, PARA 8

1. VISA FEES. ON MAY 17 VICE CONSUL MOZUR MET WITH GORANOV, MFA OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF VISA QUESTIONS, TO REVIEW BULGARIAN VISA REGULATIONS. GORANOV CONFIRMED THAT BULGARIAN OFFICIAL AND DIPLOMATIC VISAS ARE ISSUED GRATIS, BASED ON RECIPROCITY.

2. MOZUR RAISED THE MATTER OF THE \$13 CHARGE REQUIRED BY BULGARIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON FOR VISAS ISSUED TO MEMBERS OF USDA MARKETING TEAM WHICH RECENTLY VISITED BULGARIA, EMPHASIZING FACT THAT BEARERS OF OFFICIAL PASSPORTS WERE REQUIRED TO PAY FOR OFFICIAL VISAS. US EMBASSY POLICY IN SIMILAR CASES IS UNIFORMLY TO ISSUE WITHOUT CHARGE. ALSO DISCUSSED WAS A SIMILAR CASE IN WHICH DR. S. K. RHEE, AN EXCHANGE SCIENTIST VISITING BULGARIA UNDER US-BULGARIAN SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE PROGRAM, WAS CHARGED FOR HIS VISA IN MARCH BY BULGARIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. PREVIOUS PARTI-
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CIPANTS IN THIS PROGRAM HAVE BEEN ISSUED VISAS GRATIS.

3. GORANOV AT FIRST SEEMED PUZZLED BY MOZUR'S ACCOUNT AND THEN STATED HIS BELIEF THAT THERE MUSH HAVE BEEN SOME MISUNDERSTANDING AND THAT, IN HIS OPINION, THE VISAS PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE BEEN ISSUED WITHOUT CHARGE. HE INSISTED UPON RECEIPT OF A VERBAL NOTE SPECIFYING THE FACTS BEFORE

HE COULD TAKE ANY ACTION. EMBASSY FOLLOWED UP WITH REQUESTED NOTE ON MAY 18 (COPY POUCHED TO EUR/EE). NOTE CONVEYED EMBASSY'S BELIEF THAT INDIVIDUALS IN THESE CASES WERE IMPROPERLY CHARGED FEES, REQUESTED THAT FEES BE REFUNDED, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT IN FUTURE, VISAS OF THESE TYPES WILL BE ISSUED GRATIS AS HAS BEEN PAST PRACTICE.

4. WE STRONGLY URGE THAT EUR/EE TAKE A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN MONITORING BULGARIAN EMBASSY PERFORMANCE REGARDING VISA CHARGES, AND THAT YOU MAKE FORCEFUL REBUTTAL TO ANY BULGARIAN EMBASSY INSISTENCE ON CHARGING FOR VISAS IN CASES WHERE SUCH CHARGES CLEARLY SHOULD NOT BE MADE.
GARTHOFF

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